

Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM)

Annual Report

Summer Semester 2016 – Spring Semester 2017

Prepared by

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The University's *Code of Student Conduct* defines academic misconduct as "any activity that tends to compromise the academic integrity of the university, or subvert the educational process" (Faculty Rule 3335-23-04[A]). The Committee on Academic Misconduct (COAM) is charged with maintaining the University's academic integrity by investigating and adjudicating "all reported cases of student academic misconduct, with the exception of cases in a professional college having a published honor code." In instances where a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM decides upon "suitable disciplinary action" (University Rule 3335-5-487[B]). The data for this year's annual report consist of cases resolved from May 11, 2015, to May 8, 2016 and the report follows the templates for reporting developed by previous COAM chairs and coordinators. It should be noted that the 2012-13 reporting year was shorter in comparison with previous years because of calendar changes associated with OSU's conversion to semesters. The 2016-17 reporting year represents the third full reporting year since conversion to semesters. Links to previous annual reports can be found on the Senate website http://senate.osu.edu/?page_id=183 or at <http://oaa.osu.edu/coamreports.html>.

COAM is composed of 22 faculty members, nine graduate students (appointed by CGS), and nine undergraduate students (appointed by USG). The work of COAM is facilitated by the Coordinator who (1) receives and processes allegations of academic misconduct, (2) notifies students of allegations of academic misconduct, (3) consults with students and faculty regarding allegations of academic misconduct, (4) schedules hearings to resolve allegations of academic misconduct, and (5) notifies students and faculty of the outcomes of these hearings.

Every student who is charged with academic misconduct has the right to a hearing before a panel of COAM. A panel consists of at least four members of COAM, and the rules require that each panel have at least two faculty representatives and one student representative. The panel serves as an impartial hearing body that hears evidence and determines (1) if a student has

violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, and (2) an appropriate sanction in cases where a student is found "in violation." If a student agrees with the allegations of academic misconduct and waives his/her right to a hearing, he/she may have the allegations resolved as an administrative decision. For an administrative decision, a member of COAM, typically the Coordinator, serves as a hearing officer and determines appropriate sanctions.

I. SUMMARY OF CASES RESOLVED

During the 2016-2017 academic year, COAM resolved 690 cases of alleged academic misconduct. Of the cases resolved, 65.2% were resolved as administrative decisions and 34.8% were resolved as panel hearings (**Table 1**). Females and males represented 40% and 60%, respectively, of the cases resolved (**Table 2**).

Table 1
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Method of Resolution
2016-2017 Academic Year

Method of Resolution	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Administrative Decisions	450	65.2
Panel Hearings	240	34.8
Totals	690	100

Table 2
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Total Cases Resolved and Student's Gender
2016-2017 Academic Year

Gender	Number of Cases	% of Total Cases
Female	275	40
Male	415	60
Totals	690	100

Of the cases resolved by COAM this past reporting year, 586¹ (84.9%) resulted in verdicts of "in violation." The rates at which males and females were found "in violation" of the *Code of Student Conduct* were 85.1% for females and 84.8% for males (**Table 3**).

¹ Total verdicts adjusted after appeals, as noted in Section VI of this report.

Table 3
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases by Verdict and Gender
2016-2017 Academic Year

Gender	Students Found “Not In Violation”	Students Found “In Violation”	Total Cases	% In Violation (% of Total for Gender)
Female	41	234	275	85.1
Male	63	352	415	84.8
Totals	104	586	690	---

II. SUMMARY OF ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT CHARGES

When allegations of academic misconduct arise, a student often does not know or understand what he/she has allegedly done wrong. Since COAM desires that the hearing process be an educational process, the Coordinator meets with students charged with violating the Code of Student Conduct and explains the nature of the behavior that led to the allegations. Table 4 summarizes information on academic misconduct charges for the 2016-2017 academic year. The left column is a list of the types of charges used most commonly by COAM. The “Number of Charges” column lists the total number of charges assigned by COAM for each particular violation, and the “% of Total Charges” column lists the number of charges as a percentage of the total charges (1389). The last two columns list the number of findings of “in violation” associated with each charge and the respective percentage for each. For example, of 174 charges of plagiarism, 170 (97.7%) were found “in violation.”

Students are often charged with and found “in violation” of more than one charge. Thus, the total number of charges (1389) exceeds the total number of cases resolved by COAM (690), and the total for “Number In Violation” (1145) exceeds the actual number of *students* found “in violation” (586).

The relatively lower values for the percentages of students found “in violation” of unauthorized collaboration and copying are potentially misleading. They result because COAM often treats the charges of “copying” and “unauthorized collaboration” as mutually exclusive. In many of the cases where COAM receives information alleging that one student may have copied the work of another student, it is not clear which student (if any) copied and whether or not there was collusion (working together in an unauthorized manner). Thus, in many of these cases, the students involved are charged with both copying *and* unauthorized collaboration, but may be found “in violation” of only one of those charges. In other words, copying is considered to be a unilateral act, where one student copies from another, whereas unauthorized collaboration involves two students working together.

“Failure to comply with course/program policies/guidelines” generally accompanies the other more specific charges, and so a student who is found in violation on a specific charge may also be found—by entailment—in violation of course policy. In the majority of COAM cases, charges against students stem from the failure to follow course or assignment guidelines, and this charge may be used by itself alone if the allegations stem directly from a failure to follow course guidelines.

COAM’s list of standard charges was updated in 2013-14 to better correspond to the examples listed in the revised Code of Student Conduct. The following charges were added to COAM’s standard charges in 2013-14: (1) “Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations”, and (2) “Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process”, which refers to rule 3335-23-04 A of the Code of Student Conduct. It should be noted that alleged violations related to examinations might also be covered by other charges such as copying or unauthorized collaboration/ unauthorized assistance and thus the number of cases associated with this charge likely underestimates the number of incidents that occur during exams or other assessments. The latter charge is generally qualified with a specific description of the alleged misconduct when it falls outside of the most frequent charges or when the standard charges do not adequately capture the nature of the alleged misconduct.

Table 4
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Academic Misconduct Charges by Type and Verdict
2016-2017 Academic Year

Charge	Number of Charges	% of Total Charges	Number in Violation	% in Violation
Violation of course rules or assignment guidelines as contained in the course syllabus or other information provided to the student	533	38.4	458	85.9
Submitting plagiarized work for an academic requirement	174	12.5	170	97.7
Unauthorized collaboration by sharing information during an academic activity/unauthorized sharing of electronic files	132	9.5	94	71.2
Copying the work of another and representing it as one's own work	213	15.3	167	78.4
Knowingly requesting, receiving or providing unauthorized assistance during an academic activity	105	7.6	86	81.9

Possession or use of unauthorized materials during an academic activity	10	20.7	10	100.0
Compromising the academic integrity of the university/subverting the educational process + "other"	12	0.9	11	91.7
Falsification, fabrication or dishonesty in creating or reporting laboratory results, research reports, and/or any other assignments	22	1.6	19	86.4
Knowingly providing or receiving information during examinations such as course examinations and candidacy examinations; or the possession and/or use of unauthorized materials during those examinations.	127	9.1	81	63.8
Engaging in activities that unfairly place other students at an academic disadvantage.	0	0.0	0	0.0
Alteration and resubmission of course materials, grades, or marks in an attempt to change the earned credit or grade	6	0.4	6	100.0
Forgery	3	0.2	3	100.0
Providing falsified materials, documents, or records to a university official in order to meet academic qualifications, criteria, or requirements	10	0.7	8	80.0
Serving as or enlisting the assistance of a substitute for a student during an academic activity	16	1.2	13	81.3
Submission of work not performed in a course or degree program/ Submitting substantially the same work to satisfy requirements for one course or academic requirement that has been submitted in satisfaction of requirements for another course or academic requirement without permission.	19	1.4	18	94.7
Violation of program regulations or policies as established by departmental committees and made available to students.	7	0.5	1	14.3
Totals	1389	100%	1145	--

III. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT'S ENROLLMENT UNIT AND THE INITIATING UNIT

Twenty enrollment units on campus were represented in the cases resolved by COAM during the 2016-17 reporting year, with combined cases from the College of the Arts and Sciences (UASC), College of Engineering (UENG), College of Business (UBUS), and the College of Education and Human Ecology (UEHE) accounting for 70.3% of the total cases **(Table 5)**. It should be noted that although the Graduate School is listed as the enrollment units for 30 cases, those students were in graduate programs offered by other academic departments and/or colleges.

The cases heard by COAM during the past year were *initiated* from or involved courses from 80 units across the University, with the combined cases from courses in Chemistry (145 cases), Computer Science and Engineering (46), History (29), English (27) and Integrated Systems Sciences and Engineering (27) accounting for 39.7% of the total cases **(Table 6)**.

Table 5
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student's Enrollment Unit
2016-2017 Academic Year

Enrollment Unit	Total for Enrollment Unit	% of Total
UASC (College of the Arts and Sciences)	255	36.96%
UENG (College of Engineering)	152	22.03%
UEXP (Exploration Program)	78	11.30%
UBUS (College of Business)	52	7.54%
GRD (Graduate School)	30	4.35%
UEHE (Education and Human Ecology)	26	3.77%
UHRS (School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences) + UHRSP (Pre-program)	25	3.62%
UAGR (College of Food, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences)	21	3.04%
UNUR (College of Nursing) + UNURP (Nursing Pre-program)	9	1.30%
USWK (College of Social Work)	8	1.16%
UATI (Agricultural Technical Institute)	6	0.87%
UACD (Academy)	6	0.87%
UENR (School of Environment and Natural Resources)	5	0.72%
UPHR (College of Pharmacy)	4	0.58%
UPBH (College of Public Health)	4	0.58%
UDHYP (Dental Hygiene)	3	0.44%
UJGS (John Glenn College of Public Affairs)	2	0.29%
UVSTR (Visitor)	2	0.29%
UAHR (School of Architecture)	1	0.15%
UNDG (Undergraduate Non-Degree)	1	0.15%
Totals	690	100%

Table 6
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit
2016-2017 Academic Year

Course Offering Unit	Number of Cases	% of Total
CHEM [Chemistry and Biochemistry]	145	21.01%
CSE [Computer Science and Engineering]	46	6.67%
HISTORY	29	4.20%
ENGLISH	27	3.91%
ISE [Integrated Systems Engineering]	27	3.91%
MATSC&EN [Materials Science and Engineering]	22	3.19%
COMM [Communication]	20	2.90%
SOCIOL [Sociology]	20	2.90%
BIOLOGY	19	2.75%
MECH ENG [Mechanical Engineering]	18	2.61%
MATH [Mathematics]	16	2.32%
ANTHROP [Anthropology]	15	2.18%
BUS-MGT [Business Administration: Management Sciences]	13	1.88%
ECE [Electrical and Computer Engineering]	13	1.88%
ECON [Economics]	13	1.88%
EXP [University Exploration Survey]	13	1.88%
LINGUIST [Linguistics]	13	1.88%
PHYSICS	13	1.88%
AED ECON [Agricultural, Environmental and Developmental Economics]	12	1.74%
PSYCH [Psychology]	12	1.74%
STAT [Statistics]	12	1.74%
ENGR [Engineering]	10	1.45%
POLIT SC [Political Science]	10	1.45%
ART EDUC [Art Education]	9	1.30%
PHYSTHR [Physical Therapy]	9	1.30%
MUSIC	8	1.16%
ES HESA [Educational Studies: Higher Education and Student Affairs]	7	1.01%
EDU T&L [Education: Teaching and Learning]	6	0.87%
KNSFHP [Kinesiology: Sport, Fitness and Health Program]	6	0.87%
SPANISH	6	0.87%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

FRENCH	5	0.72%
THEATER	5	0.72%
COMPSTD [Comparative Studies]	4	0.58%
HORT TEC [Horticultural Technology]	4	0.58%
PHILOS [Philosophy]	4	0.58%
PUBHEHS [Public Health: Environmental Health Sciences]	4	0.58%
YIDDISH	4	0.58%
ANIM SCI [Animal Sciences]	3	0.43%
BUS-MHR [Business Administration: Management and Human Resources]	3	0.43%
EEOB [Evolution, Ecology, and Organismal Biology]	3	0.43%
GEOG [Geography]	3	0.43%
PUBHBIO [Public Health: Biostatistics]	3	0.43%
SOC WORK [Social Work]	3	0.43%
ACCTMIS [Accounting and Management Information Systems]	2	0.29%
AFAM&AST [African American & African Studies]	2	0.29%
BIOMED E [Biomedical Engineering]	2	0.29%
CRPLAN [City and Regional Planning]	2	0.29%
CLASSICS	2	0.29%
GERMAN	2	0.29%
HTHRHS [Health and Rehabilitation Sciences]	2	0.29%
HIMS [Health Information Management and Systems]	2	0.29%
HISTART [History of Art]	2	0.29%
H&CS [Horticulture and Crop Science]	2	0.29%
HUMNNTR [Human Nutrition]	2	0.29%
ITALIAN	2	0.29%
MBA [Master of Business Administration]	2	0.29%
NURSING	2	0.29%
NRSADV [Nursing Advancement]	2	0.29%
SCANDNAV [Scandinavian]	2	0.29%
ANATOMY	1	0.14%
ASTRON [Astronomy]	1	0.14%
BIOTECH [Biotechnology]	1	0.14%
BUS-FIN [Business Administration: Finance]	1	0.14%

Table 6 (continued) Distribution of Cases Based on Initiating Unit

DANCE	1	0.14%
DENTHYG [Dental Hygiene]	1	0.14%
DESIGN	1	0.14%
EARTHSC [Earth Sciences]	1	0.14%
ESEADM [Educations Studies: Educational Administration]	1	0.14%
ESCFE [Educational Studies: Foundations of Education]	1	0.14%
ESSPED [Educational Studies: Special Education]	1	0.14%
ENTOMOL [Entomology]	1	0.14%
FILMSTD [Film Studies]	1	0.14%
FD SC&TE [Food Science and Technology]	1	0.14%
INT STDS [International Studies]	1	0.14%
NELC [Near Eastern Languages and Cultures]	1	0.14%
NEUROSC [Neuroscience]	1	0.14%
PHARMACY	1	0.14%
PUBHLTH [Public Health]	1	0.14%
RELSTDS [Religious Studies]	1	0.14%
RUSSIAN	1	0.14%
TOTAL	690	100%

IV. SUMMARY OF CASES BASED ON STUDENT’S RANK AND COURSE LEVEL

Approximately 67% of the cases resolved by COAM during the 2016-17 reporting year were the result of misconduct allegations in 1000- and 2000-level courses (Table 7). Fewer cases resulted from allegations in progressively higher-level courses. Some cases of academic misconduct occur outside of a formal class taken for academic credit. Those cases are included in the category “Other”.

Table 7
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Course Level (Number)
2016-2017 Academic Year

Course Level (Semesters)	Number of Cases	% of Cases
1000	257	37.2%
2000	205	29.7%
3000	123	17.8%
4000	44	6.4%
5000	33	4.8%
6000	10	1.4%
7000	7	1.0%
8000	11	1.6%
Other	0	0.0%
TOTAL	690	100%

Table 8 summarizes the number of cases resolved at each level by student class rank. The distribution of cases for undergraduates is fairly evenly distributed across all ranks. The greatest number of cases and the highest percentage of cases within a single rank was for rank 4 students. Slightly more than 29% of cases involved rank 4 students, and of these cases, 71 (35%) occurred in 3000- level courses. However, when cases by rank are expressed as a percentage of total students within each rank based on fifteenth-day student enrollment for Autumn 2016, the distribution of cases was as follows: rank 1=1.21% (11,143 students); rank 2=1.53% (11,344 students), rank 3=1.29% (11,318 students), rank 4=1.10% (18,388 students), and graduate students (excluding graduate professional students)=0.28% (10,529 students). Note: a rank of “Other” usually represents visitors or other individuals who take courses as non-degree students.

Table 8
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Distribution of Cases Based on Student Rank and Course Level
2016-2017 Academic Year

Rank	1	2	3	4	GRD	Other	Totals	% by Course Level
Course Level								
1000	98	85	43	30	0	1	257	37.2%
2000	31	66	159	49	0	0	205	29.7%
3000	6	16	30	71	0	0	123	17.8%
4000	1	5	9	30	0	0	44	6.4%
5000	0	0	5	21	5	2	33	4.8%
6000	0	1	0	2	7	0	10	1.4%
7000	0	0	0	0	7	0	7	1.0%
8000	0	0	0	0	11	0	11	1.6%
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.0%
TOTAL	135	173	146	203	30	3	690	100.00%
% by Rank	19.6%	25.1%	21.2%	29.4%	4.3%	0.4%	100.00%	

V. Summary of Disciplinary and Grade Sanctions

When COAM finds that a student has violated the University's *Code of Student Conduct*, COAM imposes sanctions. A sanction typically includes a disciplinary component and a grade-related component.

The disciplinary sanctions imposed by COAM and the number of cases involved are summarized in **Table 9**. Of the 690 cases resolved during the 2016-2017 Academic Year, 586 resulted in a finding of "in violation" and these were accompanied by a disciplinary sanction. As these data demonstrate, most students found *in violation of the Code of Student Conduct* received a sanction of "disciplinary probation."

Table 9
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions
2016-2017 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	89	15.2%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	463	79.0%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	26	4.4%
Dismissal	8	1.4%
Totals	586	100%

The grade sanctions imposed by COAM and the numbers of cases involved are summarized in **Table 10**.

Of the 586 cases in which a student was found "in violation" in 2016-17, no grade sanction was authorized in 37 of the cases. As these data demonstrate, the modal grade sanction for

students found “in violation” of the University’s *Code of Student Conduct* is an authorization for a “0” on all or part of the assignment. In most instances, COAM authorizes the instructor to award a grade sanction. In some instances, COAM imposes the sanction of a failing grade directly via the Registrar: “re-enroll with a failing grade” and “E” by action of University Committee. These failing grades may not be removed from the advising report or transcript by petition or retroactive withdrawal from the course. Hearing panels and hearing officers have the option to create grade sanctions appropriate to individual cases of academic misconduct. Grade sanctions created by hearing panels or hearing officers are included in the category “Other”.

Table 10
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions
2016-2017 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	37	6.3%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	330	56.3%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	21	3.6%
Authorization for “0” on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	146	24.9%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or “U” in the course	14	2.4%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by “action of University Committee”	27	4.6%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	3	0.5%
Other	8	1.4%
Totals	586	100%

A summary of the disciplinary sanctions received by graduate students who were found in violation of the Code of Student Conduct is given in **Table 11**.

Table 11
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Disciplinary Sanctions for Graduate Students
2016-2017 Academic Year

Disciplinary Sanction	Number of Cases "In Violation"	% of Cases
Formal reprimand	0	0.0%
Disciplinary probation (range = 1 term to "until graduation")	20	90.9%
Suspension (range = 1 to 3 terms)	0	0.0%
Dismissal	2	9.1%
Totals	22	100%

A summary of the grade sanctions received by graduate students during the 2016-2017 academic year is provided in **Table 12**.

Table 12
Committee on Academic Misconduct
Summary of Grade Sanctions for Graduate Students
2016-2017 Academic Year

Grade Sanction	Number of Cases	% of Cases
None	0	0.0%
Authorization for a "0" on all or part of the assignment	6	27.35%
Authorization for a reduction in the student's final course grade	0	0.0%

Authorization for "0" on the assignment and a further reduction of the final letter grade in the course	11	50.0%
Authorization for a final grade of "E" or "U" in the course	2	9.1%
Final Grade of E/U/NP by "action of University Committee"	3	13.6%
Re-enroll with a final failing grade for the course	0	0.0%
Other	0	0.0%
Totals	22	100

VI. Appeals

A student who has been found in violation of the *Code of Student Conduct* has the right to appeal the original decision of the hearing panel or hearing officer. The appeal is not intended to re-hear or re-argue the same case, and is limited to specific grounds as outlined in the *Code of Student Conduct*. Appeals of decisions of the Committee on Academic Misconduct or its Coordinator are submitted for decision to the Executive Vice President and Provost or designee. Of the 586 cases in which the student was found to be in violation by COAM in 2016-2017, 54 cases were appealed. In 47 instances, the decision of the Committee was upheld. Seven of the appeals were granted and the sanctions were adjusted in all seven cases.